

1. Cemetery Complaints

We have received two complaints about the cemetery and have worked through the proper channels to resolve them. No further action due

2. Recruitment Updates

- *Open Spaces and Cemetery Operative:* Rob Ward has joined us as Open Spaces and Cemetery Operative
- *Caretaker Position:* We have made an appointment subject to satisfactory references and have identified a backup candidate just in case
- *Clerk Recruitment:* The recruitment pack is presented for approval at FC on 24 July. We are finalising advertising and recruitment plans as the EALC may not be the best option due to potential impartiality concerns relating to Chigwell Parish Council. We have switched to an online application system to make things quicker and more transparent. CVs are not accepted. The role will be advertised in August and with a close date of 4 September. If a suitable calibre of applicant is not received the matter of engaging specialist recruitment support may be recommended

3. Employment Matters

- All job descriptions have been reviewed, redrafted and are being agreed with staff. Job titles have been updated and it is recommended that one employee's hours contracted hours are increased for 35 to 37 per week as they are working 37 hours a week as a minimum. The alternative would be for the Council to pay overtime/give TOIL which is not the recommended option
- CPC employment policies and staff handbook have been finalised and provided to Council for adoption
- New HR digital system to store all records in a GDPR compliant way and maintain holiday/absence records being adopted
- New employment contracts are being finalised based on agreed JD's, titles and hours.
- All policies continue to be reviewed and amended and will be provided to council for information purposes
- Some staff appraisals took place 4 July with the balance scheduled for 7th August.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

A fire risk assessment was completed on 17 April but had not been acted on until recently. The necessary tasks, though few, have now been assigned to the right staff members and are being addressed. A member of staff has questioned their role and responsibilities and this will be reviewed by me and Hayley.

5. Health and Safety with Third-Party Users – Liability Concerns

The Parish has been over focused with health and safety when third parties use council land, for example by asking event organisers to provide detailed information about their suppliers. While this comes from good intentions, it could actually expose the Council to liability risks. Generally, the Parish owns the land but it is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure everything is safe and compliant. The Terms and Usage Agreement has been updated to reflect this

6. Communication and Media Strategy

A communications and media strategy is currently being drafted to support the Parish Council's position regarding planning proposals affecting Green Belt land in Chigwell. The strategy will focus

on raising public awareness, mobilising community support and generating funding through local networks, social media and press engagement. It will be presented to Full Council for approval

7. UKSPF Grant

Negotiations continue with EFDC regarding the terms of the grant offered which are currently unacceptable for fiduciary reasons. Once the final grant terms are established, an analysis of the options will be provided to Full Council to make an informed decision.

8. Parish Office Use

The local Primary Care Network has been approached and are assisting in contacting relevant stakeholders and arranging a discussion.

9. Cemetery Gates

Officers are putting the arrangement for opening and closing in place as agreed by Full Council

10. VAT

The recent discussion regarding VAT among councillors was noted. It seems to have arisen as a result of the bench proposals. Please note that under VATGPB8645 - Other local authority activities: miscellaneous (A to E): cemeteries and crematoria state that the supply of an immovable memorial, with a right over land for a fixed period (with or without interred ashes) is exempt for VAT. This differs from the sale of a bench as a stand alone object which would be standard rated. Please note we are not selling a bench, we are selling rights over land for a fixed period with an immovable memorial bench included hence it is considered VAT exempt.

11. Review of Premises Usage

As per the recommendations of the strategic asset and risk review as agreed by Full Council, the review process is underway. A cost-benefit review is ongoing, led by the Chair, the Vice Chair, Cllr Costa and the Acting Clerk and the findings will be reported back through the delegated channels. The objective of the recommendations is to enable Full Council to make a fully informed decision when agreeing future strategy for usage which could include a combination of options set out in the strategic asset and risk review. As required, a formal policy on community not for profit use of Parish assets has been developed by officers. This will include criteria for subsidised access, value-for-money assessment and approved processes for approval

12. Unauthorised use of Station Green

A formal policy on community not for profit use of Parish assets has been developed by officers. This will include criteria for subsidised access, value-for-money assessment and approved processes for approval

13. Cease and Desist Letter issued

See Appendix 8